

THE REALITY OF THE DIVINE AND MYSTICAL REALM

By Titus Chu

MESSAGE THREE: TREASURE THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE AND LAY HOLD ON THE COMMON FAITH (3)

In these messages I am not stressing how to do something in the church life, but how to appreciate the right things. Your appreciation of the right matters will bring you into a healthy exercise more than any advice on how to practically carry something out. In fact, it is often when we attempt to do something in the church life that we cause problems and raise issues. A proper appreciation, however, will enable you to value and enjoy what the Lord has provided for a healthy church life. As in a marriage, the secret for oneness and enjoyment is learning to appreciate one another. When this appreciation is lost, we find it easy to begin to criticize, and when this happens the oneness among us is lost. Therefore your healthy exercise doesn't begin with what you do, but with a proper appreciation.

You must have a deep appreciation for the one new man. Oh, how the heart of the Lord is after this one new man! Furthermore, appreciate the exercise of the stewardship, and how man can be so one with God to carry out God's economy! Then, appreciate the oneness of the Spirit. There are endless opportunities for you to offend others, and to be offended. I am thankful that, from my youth, I have not had a good memory! I just appreciate that there is a oneness. Some love you, some may even feel they hate you, but there is a oneness that comes from the Lord that can never be offended or lost as long as we appreciate what is in this realm.

How can this oneness be broken? Is it by a brother declaring he is a Baptist? Does his declaration make him any less a member of the Body? Is he a member of the “Baptist” body, and we members of the “one Body” body? There is only one Body! Even Pope John Paul is in this one body! As long as you don’t look at him as a pope, he is just a dear, precious brother in the Lord. There are seven things the Lord has given us that are unbreakable, and one of them is this the one Body. It doesn’t matter what name you use or how you practice or which Christian group you go to, for we all are one Body! It cannot be divided! You cannot say, because someone is not meeting with us, that they are not in the one mystical, organic Body! The Body is something begotten by the Lord in resurrection. This Body includes millions of Christians, through two thousand years! When you are not enjoying Jesus, does He depart from you, and then return when you turn your heart back to Him? Of course not! If you are regenerated, the Lord is with you forever! But if you do not experience being in His presence, He does not depart from you. In the same way, if a person is not meeting with us, it does not mean he or she is not a member of the Body!

The final time Brother Lee shared with us before he passed away, he expressed his burden about this matter of receiving the believers. He told us that he deeply regretted that he had not received the believers in denominations as he should have, and urged us to consider this matter. His final word to us was regarding this matter of receiving. How do you exercise to receive other believers? It is not by making issues. Even if they are the ones to make issues, it makes them no less brothers, and it should not cause us to love them less. The life relationship remains, for it is unbreakable.

There is only one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one hope. Every believer shares the hope of being in eternity with the Lord. It doesn’t matter whether someone believes in pre- or post- or miscellaneous-rapture. It doesn’t even matter if they believe in the kingdom as we do. Every believer hopes to be with the Lord in eternity. “One faith” also cannot be broken.

Even “one baptism” cannot be broken. Regardless of the method, there is one baptism. I feel it should be handled soberly, but I receive those who were baptized in their bathtub, for there is only one baptism. I love these seven “ones.” Eventually, there is one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

So what is the problem? The problem is that some like to add something to these seven. “How about the materials you use?” “How about the version of the Bible?” Even though the Recovery Version is the best, we cannot be a “Recovery Version” church! We should practice to speak the high truths, but our oneness is not based on these high truths. Our oneness is based upon these seven unbreakable “ones.” Our oneness can only be broken if we add things other than these seven as the basis of our oneness. A person who insists on issues besides these as the basis of our oneness is divisive. A local church must have the ability to receive all the believers. Anything that makes us specialized makes us exclusive and causes us to become selective.

Some saints need to realize that, according to the Bible, the secret of the church life is not to do certain things correctly, but to do all things with all meekness, in all lowliness, bearing one another in love.

**Appreciate That We All are Gifted
But Our Gifts Need to be Perfected**

In order to have a healthy exercise in the divine and mystical realm, we must do two things. First, we must appreciate ourselves, since God has gifted each of us. Second, we must realize that our gift needs perfecting. For this reason God has given certain saints as gifts to the Body.

In the original language of the New Testament, the word used for gift in Ephesians 4:7 and the word used for gift in 4:8 are not the same in the Greek. First, in verse 7, Paul tells us that each one of us has a measure of the gift (*dorea*) of Christ. We all have a gift. Second, in verse 8, after Christ's ascension, Paul says He gave gifts (*doma*) to men. Those who receive the gift (*dorea*) of Christ are able to become gifts (*doma*) to men. We have all received the gift (*dorea*) of Christ. But to grow and be perfected so that our gift becomes a gift (*doma*) to the Body is a long process.

In the original Greek language nouns that end in “-ma” were words that typically took its origin from a verb. Very often these words are the result of the action of the verb. We may imply from this that becoming a gift (*doma*) to the Body of Christ is the result of a process. This process takes all who have the initial gift (*dorea*) of Christ and constitutes them to become a gift (*doma*) to the Body. But for this to happen, we must be faithful. If we want to go on from possessing a gift to becoming a gift, we must give ourselves to be perfected.

Something within us spontaneously appreciates the saints who have been given to the Body as gifts, for the gift within us responds to what has been formed in them. This is why there is a love and respect within us for the older brothers.

Everyone, young and old, should declare, “I am gifted!” The reason everyone needs to declare that they are gifted is because we have a hard time believing it. Furthermore, few Christians realize what their gift is, and even fewer grow to see their gift operate and become a blessing to the Body of Christ. This is why the Lord has given some particular gifts to the Body ahead of us for our perfecting. Everyone possessing a gift needs to be perfected.

Some are more gifted; some less. What matters most is not how great your gift is, but whether you are faithful to that gift. Often we are not satisfied with who we are, and therefore we are not faithful to what the Lord has given us. Instead, we envy the brother or sister next to us. This is interesting, for the more gifted saints wish they could just sit and enjoy along with the others, while the less gifted saints wish they could be more manifested and operational!

How does the Lord give the perfecting gifts? According to Ephesians 4:7-13, they are given through the operation of Christ in His ascension. He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as shepherds and teachers. When we consider this list of gifts, it is very easy to consider them as being “extra” special. But it should be normal to have many brothers and sisters among us function as such gifts. The apostles define the truth and raise up churches. Prophets are those who unveil what it is the Lord’s desire. Evangelists propagate the Lord’s kingdom on earth. Shepherd-teachers care for the needs of the saints, mainly by teaching.

***Those Given as Gifts Perfect Us
Until We Become a Gift To The Body***

First of all, the process of being perfected is something organic. A degree from a theological school does not mean you have been perfected. If you only have received knowledge without anything organic, those you teach will not receive anything of life from you. Therefore, at every stage of your growth and learning you must be able to say, “I have life. I am being fed. I am being satisfied. Something organic within me is growing!”

Second, the process of being perfected does indeed require equipping in the truth. You must know what is in the Bible. You must understand the basic truths and what is revealed in the Word. If you do not have such equipping, what you have been given as a gift will not grow well.

Third, the process of being perfected requires that you be furnished with the divine riches of God's attributes. You must be constituted with what is divine. To be perfected as a gift does not mean that you are merely trained to carry out a spiritual job. I do not like to see a brother share in a meeting who does not spend time with the Lord. But I get even more concerned when I see a brother spend hours preparing a message with all kinds of reference books before him. Such messages may have a lot of content, but they usually kill the saints. To become constituted as a gift, you need not only to be equipped in knowledge, but also furnished with the divine attributes. You have to become rich in who God is. Furnish yourself in the riches found in the person of the Triune God! If you are someone equipped in truth and furnished with the divine attributes, you will certainly be one who is able to supply life to others as a gift supplied by God to the Body of Christ!

The gift you initially received was only an ability. The process of perfecting requires the building up of your constitution, for it is your constitution that makes you who you are, and your constitution, that is, who you are, determines your operation in the church life.

Some brothers make raising issues their mission in the church life. In such a state these brothers are not gifts, nor are they developing into gifts. Causing issues is a very "cheap" way to have an impact in the church life. Instead of building up the church, raising issues destroys it.

Becoming a gift to the Body requires a long process of growth and perfecting. Every stage requires paying a price for our further equipping in truth and being constitute with the divine attributes. Only by living such a life do we become life-giving members who are blessings to the Body of Christ.

***The One New Testament Ministry
Is a Collective Ministry***

The perfecting of the saints ultimately issues in a ministry. In Ephesians 4:12, the word for “ministry” in the original language has no definite article. It is not “the ministry,” but “ministry.” Just like “mankind” is a collective noun that includes every human being, “ministry” in this verse refers to a collective ministry. The perfecting of the saints is unto such a ministry. There is but one New Testament ministry, yet it is carried out by all the perfected believers.

***Arriving at the Oneness
of Laying Hold of Christ***

The perfecting of the saints also results in the saints arriving at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God. What is oneness of the faith? Witness Lee states that our oneness is of the divine person of Christ and the redemptive work He accomplished for our salvation (Eph. 4:13, note 2, RcVer). Christ’s accomplishment and person are what all genuine believers share in common. Arriving at the oneness of the full knowledge of the Son of God refers to every believer experientially laying hold of the Christ of their faith.

Hymn #1107 states:

*We stand as one, and cannot be divided,
Because our oneness is of Christ alone.
We eat as one: one loaf, one cup partaking,
And thus our oneness visibly is shown.*

What is the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God? It is the oneness we possess when we lay hold of Christ alone. Only when we hold to Christ Himself do we have a oneness that cannot be divided. In this unique oneness there are no issues!

As the gifts function to perfect the saints, there should be a sweet oneness among the believers, for the perfecting of the saints should issue in this oneness of the faith. The perfecting of the saints also issues in the saints together becoming a full-grown man, and arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

Appreciate Holding to Truth in Love

For our healthy exercise in the divine and mystical realm, we must also appreciate the matter of holding to truth in love. There are two things involved in this - both our person and the truth. First of all, our person must be exercised in love. In order to hold to truth in love, you must be a person exercising love. Second, we must recognize the things that are true, which are Christ and His Body (Eph. 4:15, note 1, RcV.). This truth equals the content and reality of the common faith possessed by all believers.

What is this faith? Our common faith has as its contents all the items of belief that make us genuine blood-washed, born-again, Spirit-filled Christians. We believe that:

- 1) The Bible was divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit and contains the complete divine revelation of God's desire (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).
- 2) God is uniquely the one Triune God - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit - existing together eternally (1 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19).
- 3) The Son of God, even God Himself, became the man, Jesus, born of a virgin to be our Redeemer and Savior (Matt. 1:20-25; John 1:1,14).
- 4) Jesus as the complete God and perfect man lived on this earth as a man making known God the Father to mankind (John 14:7-12).

- 5) Christ was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; 4:18-21) and died on the cross and shed His blood for our redemption (John 19:33-34; Eph. 1:7).
- 6) Christ was buried and resurrected physically and spiritually in three days (1 Cor. 15:4), became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), and breathed into the disciples the Holy Spirit (John 20:22).
- 7) Christ resurrected and ascended to the heavens and was made Lord and Christ of all (Acts 2:32-36).
- 8) After Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit was poured upon His believers to baptize them into one Body (Acts 2:33; 1 Cor. 12:13). This Spirit is convicting the world (John 16:8-11), abides in the believers (John 14:17), and is building them up (Jude 20; Eph. 2:21-22) as the one Body of Christ for His expression.
- 9) The end of this age will come (Matt. 24:14) when Christ will return as the Son of Man and gather His chosen (Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:30-31), judging the earth in righteousness, establishing His kingdom on the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16).
- 10) Overcoming believers, those who were martyred for the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Then all believers, all those written in the book of life, will participate in the eternal enjoyment of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 20:15-22:5).¹

¹ Adapted from the booklet *Our Beliefs and Practices*, published by the Living Stream Ministry, Anaheim, California

These are the items of our common faith. This is the truth we hold to in love. In our local church life, there should be no other issues we hold to. We only care for Christ and the church. This should occupy our entire being! In the local churches, we give ourselves to the Lord that among us He might display the riches of who He is and what He has accomplished and attained.

**Appreciate the Putting On
of the New Man by Being Renewed
in the Spirit of our Mind**

In order to put on the new man, we must first appreciate what it is to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Putting on the new man is not something we can do by simply by stirring ourselves up. No, we must pay attention to the matter of being renewed in the spirit of our mind. Our unrenewed mind is the source of all the oldness in the church life. When the younger saints insist on the songs that fit them, and the older saints insist on the songs that fit them, possibly neither preference is something of the renewing of the spirit of the mind. What is the secret of not having differing opinions? The secret is to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. As we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, we put on the new man, where there are no issues and where there is no enmity.

If your mind is renewed, nobody offends you. Instead, every time you think of a brother, you see Him as He is in Christ. In the new man, all the brothers and sisters are lovely. Even if it seems you have been treated unjustly, still exercise to be kind to one another, and hold to one another in love.

Appreciate the Vitality of the Spirit by being Filled in Spirit

Appreciate the Spirit and the word of Christ. Teach and admonish one another. Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and psalm with your hearts to the Lord! Be filled in spirit! Come to the riches of truth and to the Bible with a living spirit. Every local church can become dynamic and vital by paying attention to being filled in spirit. All of what has been shared requires one thing in particular: our being filled in spirit! It is by our spirit that we experience the reality of the divine and mystical realm. Therefore, how vital it is that we be filled in spirit!

This article is available online at
MinistryMessages.org

© 2005 Titus Chu